

To Soroptimist International of Blackpool & District

Are you settled comfortably?

You need to be.

Here goes with the Windmill Bulletin.

May as well start chronologically from January 1st last.

For that is when the Group altered its 'Development Systems'.

We no longer have the personal responsibility of the individual.

That is, we do not train them physically every week.

We do not personally prepare them or supervise their physical activities.

That means we do not require to be insured for those tasks and all the various other difficulties arising in those activities.

It was a great wrench, for me especially.

But it is for the best.

I am too old for that role now in reality.

However, our role as a charity in supporting young people through their DofE Awards is now stronger than ever.

We have now opened ourselves up to, financially supporting, any young person in the Blackpool and Fylde area who wishes to complete their Gold Award.

As I write this, a 'new state of the art' Windmill Web Site is being professionally produced to highlight this fact.

It will be in this format.

An application will be made to us.

We then have a video meeting with the applicant and then make a decision to financially support them or not.

If successful they will be given all the support and guidance towards a successful outcome.

I am not going to ramble on as to how there is an absolute dearth of Gold Award achievers in our area, brought about by many factors both old and new. There are just not the opportunities anymore. You know that already.

Getting through to Gold requires considerable dedication on their part and doing it solo is expensive.

That is the new Windmill role, to support those with fire enough to succeed.

I am a fortunate man.

My son Samuel now owns a number of very successful companies, worldwide, specialising in outdoor achievement and education.

He fully appreciates the opportunities given to him as he grew into adulthood.

He is now forty years old and a month ago took the plunge into matrimony.

He has been the vice chair and a trustee of the Windmill Group for some years now.

He endorses the value of him being given those opportunities and in consequence offers to young people in the Blackpool and Fylde area, endeavouring to obtain a DofE Gold, expeditions and courses, at below the cost price to his companies. He also vets other organisations we may consider.

The cost to a young person without support runs into thousands of pounds .

Viz:

Equipment.

Training courses

Practice expeditions

Assessed expeditions

Residential courses.

The major brunt in the cost and expertise in gaining that coveted Award has been significantly reduced by Sam's actions.

Now.

The promised up to date and how you and your lady Soroptimists faired in supporting the following young people in their journey from Bronze to Gold.

They have all achieved Bronze and Silver. I now only speak of Gold.

There are five sections.: Volunteering: Physical: Skills: Expedition: Residential.

- Bradley. A virtual lifetime in Care. Only his Residential to complete. Now out of care with a loving family.
- Callum. Abandoned by his parents. Now successfully making his own way. Only his Residential to complete.
- Dean. Well adjusted because of his loving single mum. Only his Residential to complete.
- Hannah. Suffered a maelstrom of domestic difficulty. Now settled. Only her Residential to complete.
- Jack H. Loving family. Has obtained a sponsored university course with BAE at Bristol with a salary. Has completed the Award.
- Jack P. Despite all his attention difficulties only now has his Residential to complete.
 - Because of being initially under 16 missed out initially on Gold.
- Ruby. Now settled. Hard working. Has her Expedition and Residential to complete. Same reason under 16 initially.
- Ros. Loving and caring family. Gold completed.
- Sab. Loving family. Has joined the Army with a fully sponsored University Degree course, with pay. Gold complete.
- SLH. Loving family (Mum & Dad were Windmillers). Soaring through her education. Gold complete.
- SW. Desperate family history but now only has his Residential to complete.

As an addition they ALL also obtained an Advanced John Muir Award. That in itself, a serious achievement.

That is eleven, seven boys, four girls. Did not lose a single one at Gold.

However, a certain few never made it through Bronze or Silver.
Not because of their backgrounds, they just did not have that determination within themselves to succeed.

Despite the DofE Scheme trying to make it easier to succeed, the Windmill Group have never dropped the bar.

Quite often to the chagrin of their head office.

To do so would be an insult to the above-mentioned young people..

For the Award to be a significant achievement it must be seen as so, especially to those who in their day had to achieve that high standard.

(Some of your ladies may note).

In conclusion:

Soroptimist International Blackpool and District, have played a huge part in the development and success of these and other youngsters over the years.

They have not only assisted financially but also with their time and expertise.

The trustees of the Windmill Group and above all, the young people whose futures you have touched are eternally in your debt.